



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

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MEDIA RELEASE
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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

WEARE MAN CONVICTED OF FEDERAL WEAPON CHARGE

Re: United States v. Stephen LaBranche

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Resident Agent in Charge Kraig Hankins announced that Steven LABRANCHE, DOB 10/4/69, of Weare, New Hampshire, was convicted today of unlawful possession of a firearms and ammunition after being convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor.

LABRANCHE, a convicted domestic violence abuser, illegally possessed a Ruger .22 caliber rifle and rounds of ammunition in several calibers at his Weare home in June, 2002. The weapon was discovered by his Hillsborough County Probation Officer during a supervisory search of LABRANCHE's home after his conviction for assaulting his former girlfriend. Federal law prohibits individuals convicted of domestic violence assault from purchasing or possessing firearms. He faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years.

LABRANCHE entered a guilty plea to the charge before U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe, and was released under behavioral conditions to be supervised by the U.S. Department of Probation pending his June 25, 2003 sentencing hearing.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "Prosecuting convicted domestic violence abusers for illegally possessing firearms is one of the main goals of both the federal firearms laws and Project Safe Neighborhoods. The office is committed to aggressively pursuing these cases, and will continue to work with federal, state, and local authorities to do so."

The investigation of LABRANCHE, part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" (PSN) initiative, was conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante.